



Town of Darien

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Ticks, Lyme Disease & Darien

The Health Department accepts ticks and submits them to the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAEG) for testing. Because of the continued widespread concern and the serious health implications from Lyme Disease, this office maintains constant surveillance and offers the following:

- Only those ticks removed from humans are tested for *Borrelia burgdorferi*, the causative agent of Lyme Disease – the lab does not test ticks taken from pets.
- In order for a tick carrying Lyme Disease to infect an individual, it must be attached to a human for at least 24 hours and be fully “engorged” with human blood.
- The lab will only test ticks that have been engorged.
- *If the tick was not engorged, Lyme Disease transmission did not occur and the tick will not be tested.*
- From 2010 through 2014, the Darien Health Department has submitted 612 ticks for testing. Fewer than half of those were tested by the lab and 32% of those that were tested were positive.
- In 2014, 27% of the ticks tested in Connecticut were found to be positive.
- Testing done through CAEG is free and the results are usually available within a few days.

Some ways to reduce your risk to Lyme Disease:

- A recent study performed at Yale noted that the risk of contracting Lyme Disease is reduced by as much as 58% if one bathed or showered within two (2) hours of being outside in tick infested areas (which is just about anywhere there is underbrush).
- People who check themselves for ticks reduce the likelihood for contracting Lyme Disease
- Repellants, especially ones containing at least 30% DEET, have been shown to be effective for approximately three (3) hours after application.
- Reduce brush areas at the perimeter of yards, perhaps by installing a gravel walkway where the lawn meets the woods.
- *Rodents, especially mice, are major carriers of ticks so you should minimize potential harborage areas such as wood and brush piles.*
- Birds carry ticks so keep birdfeeders away from the house. Also, birdfeeders attract rodents that carry ticks
- Other approaches such as yard treatments with pesticides or wearing various types of protective clothing is available but we all know how difficult it is to wear long sleeves and tuck long pants into boots when hiking or working in the garden in the summer. Vigilance is the best defense.
- Free tick removal kits are available at the Health Department office in the Darien Town Hall.

Remember, if you submit a tick and it is found to be negative or it is not tested by the lab, you are not at risk for Lyme Disease from that tick.